

Lesson Highlights:

1. There is a need to evaluate the place of religion in relation to practical living.
2. The fundamentals of religious truth: the existence of God, the fact of a supernatural revelation, and the foundation of a Faith to bring all people to eternal salvation.
3. Catholicism is a way of life.
4. Clear-cut thinking on God, on Christ, on the Church is a personal and social necessity.
5. If we seek the truth that is contained in basic religious principles and follow the truth to logical conclusion we will then find the liberty and happiness we seek.
6. Three Important Realities of this course: God, Jesus, The Church
7. Three proofs offered for the existence of God:
Historical- All people at all times in all countries have believed in the existence of God. (There are some individuals who are exceptions.)
Uncaused Cause- Uses the principle that there must be a cause for everything that exists. If there was ever a moment at which nothing existed, nothing could ever exist. Nowhere in the world can we find a thing that was not caused.
Intelligent Design- Uses the argument that everything that exists was designed by someone or something of intelligence. From a clock all the way to the human body or a child in it's mothers womb. "To put it briefly: Wherever we see a thing in perfect order of acting according to plan, our common sense tells us that there is an intelligent planner behind it. All over the earth there are things working in perfect order. Therefore, these things demand some Intelligent Planner. This Intelligent Planner we call God."
8. Evolution as a possible explanation of the origins of the universe. It is only a theory that lacks solid proof that natural selection and chance can produce new species and organisms. There are gaps in fossil records, "no missing links". Even if evolution was proven true, it would not make sense unless a Creator who planned things started everything in motion. "... A human's spiritual soul is created directly by God". JP II.
9. God expects a certain amount of faith from us and we cannot prove everything about our Faith.

Week One: Truth and the Search for God

First we begin with the general nature and purpose of the course, with emphasis on the existence of God, the miracles of Jesus Christ and those occurring in modern times, the medical and historical analysis of the Passion of Christ, the historical evidence for the resurrection, papal infallibility, ecumenism, heaven, hell, purgatory, and the role of the blessed Mother in the Church and in the world. In other words, everything you need to know about the Catholic Church to be able to answer the question: "What do Catholics believe?"



Prayer, Journaling and Sharing

Read Psalm 8, write and share your reflection from the questions below...

Is Church boring? Why is religion necessary? How does it play an important role in your life?

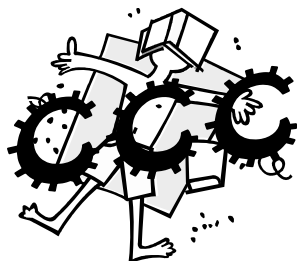


Discussion

Discuss some examples of the world's interest in God, and some examples of how "atheism" affects our society today?

Discuss some conflicts between science and religion. Are they always opposed to one another?

Is there a God? Why or why not?



Let's Try the Catechism

Look at paragraphs

36-49, 142-165 and 2123-2128

The Six Types of Adolescent Development

PHYSICAL

INTELLECTUAL

SEXUAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

EMOTIONAL

SPIRITUAL

The Stages of a Maturing Faith

EXPERIENTIAL (Imitative)

SEARCHING (for a deeper sense of self)

AFFILIATIVE (Membership)

ADULT (Committed even with inadequacy - Rare)

ACCEPTING (of Authority and Direction)

OWNED (Absorbed in mystery – Very Rare)

The times when faith played a **positive** role or was an important part of my life...

Graph any significant faith events in your life from positive to negative...

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

The times when faith played a **negative** role or was NOT an important part of my

The Place of Religion

Lesson Highlights:

- Why is religion necessary for us?
- Is one religion as good or true as another?
- We will begin the search for the truest and most reliable religion with Christianity because of its numbers of followers and its influence on human history.

Three elements of religion:

God- is infinitely perfect,
God is a personal Being
God is the cause of every other existing thing, myself and my relation between God and myself.

Definition of Religion: The collection of truths and duties which arise from our dependence upon God. We depend more on God than upon other humans because we owe our very existence to God.

Why Is Religion Necessary for the Human Race?

Our obligation of **thanks**
Our obligation of **adoration**
Our need for **petition** to God

Is one religion as good as another?

No two Christian religions completely agree so is one right and one wrong? We all need to have liquid to survive, but are all liquids equal? Would you give a child milk or brandy? Some religions are pagan and make sacrifices, is that good?

Spread Truth, not Error

We are speaking only of subjective truth, not of the subjective consciences of the people involved. There are good and sincere persons in all religions, and God will reward them accordingly. However, their sincerity cannot change what is objectively false."

There are differences between moral issues: Abortion, divorce and homosexuality are areas where we disagree. "One religion is as good as another?" Substitute the following words in the statement: Car, politician, football team.

Danger of Indifferentism

"To reckon that there is no difference between contraries and opposites has surely this ruinous result, that there is no readiness to accept any religion either in theory or in practice." Pope John XXIII

If a man believes all religions are true then: Either he believes all religions are true and thus must say that their contradictions are true, or he believes that only one religion is true, and then he is simply a hypocrite when he approves the others as being equally good, or he believes none is true and his only alternative here is to follow none.

The Place for Religion and the Gospel in Our Lives

The purpose of this lesson is to show that religion is natural and necessary for us and that one religion is not as good or true as another. Religious indifference implies that there is no such thing as objective truth, that truth and falsehood are equally pleasing to God, and that God, who has revealed to us certain truths to help us get to heaven, does not really care whether we accept those truths or not. God, and only God, decides who will go to heaven!



Prayer, Journaling and Sharing

Read Matthew 12: 38-44, write and share your reflection from the questions below...

Whom do you know that is a person of "deep faith"?

What do you think are some of the "dead ends" that people are following to try and find happiness?

Faith is...

TRUST

FROM THE HEART

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

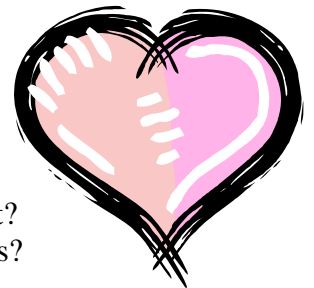
**A PERSONAL
COMMITMENT**

A WAY OF LIFE

Discussion

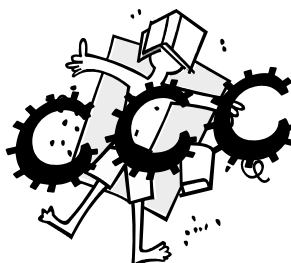
Is one Christian religion as good as another?
What does it mean to say that faith is a commitment?
Can we get reliable historical facts from the Gospels?
What is the purpose of the Gospels?

Look at the Credo on the back and discuss it as a whole.



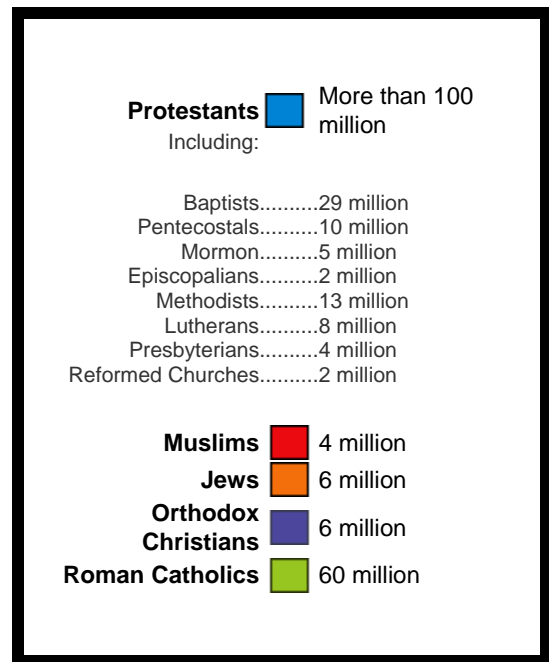
Let's Try the Catechism

*Look at paragraphs
185-197, 736, 1832, 2104-2109*



The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge
the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.



The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Part One: Ecumenism

The purpose of this chapter is to define and explain the concept of ecumenism, as the Catholic Church has circumscribed it, so that Catholics may participate intelligently in efforts to bring unity among all the people of God.

1. Discuss what the term ecumenism does not mean
2. State that the mission and ecumenism of the Church is the same nature and mission –our salvation. That we all may be one.
3. Vatican II committed the Church to the work of ecumenism.
4. Ut Unim Sint – (That All May Be One), document from Vatican II Council –
5. Christ calls his disciples to unity. If you read the fathers of the Church, there is no greater horror than to cause disunity in the Church. For example, Ignatius of Antioch, as he gives the threefold Holy Orders distinction of deacon, priest and bishop, constantly mentions the unification of the human race in Christ.
6. Fullness of unity is found in the Roman Catholic Church but that does not mean others who are not Roman Catholic cannot participate in that unity.
7. Efforts toward unity in themselves are signs of God reconciling us to himself. So it is not simply a matter of unity between myself and God but that we are to be united as a body.
8. The main point of ecumenical activity is the work of the Holy Spirit.. If we keep that in mind, we will become less discouraged.
9. Being ecumenical does not mean compromising the Deposit of Faith. Use the chain of faith at the end of the chapter for review with the students.

Part Two: The Beginning

The purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into the fact and meaning of creation and to stress the effects of original sin) on the human race.

1. Two questions which have throughout history always risen in the hearts and minds of each generation are “Where do we come from?” and “What is our end?” (CCC[Catechism of the Catholic Church] 282)
2. The creation account in the first three chapters of Genesis.
3. The Bible is religious history and not a scientific explanation of the origin of the universe.
4. God is the Creator of angels and spiritual beings.
5. God is the Creator of heaven and earth.
6. The human race occupies a unique place in creation, for we are created “in the image of God” (Gn 1:27)

Part Three: “The World’s Greatest Evil”

The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of the fall of Adam and Eve and to describe how this sin has affected the whole human family. The lesson includes a definition of sin and discussion of the different kinds of sin.

1. Sin exists in the history of humanity. (CCC 386)
2. Revelation of sin in the Old Testament recognizes a universal need for salvation. In the New Testament Christ is the one sent to be the salvation.
3. Review from Chapter 16 that original sin is a part of humanity and is inherited.
4. There are two kinds of sins that a person can commit. They are mortal and venial sins.
5. The difference between temptation and sin.
6. There are seven capital sins: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth.

Week Three

Ecumenism, The Beginning, and The Greatest Evil

Prayer, Journaling and Sharing

Read Matthew 8: 5-10, write and share your reflection from the questions below...

Christians are in a bind, on one hand we can be “stuck up” thinking we have all the answers, while on the other hand we’re given “The Truth” to share. Given this, what is the mission of our Catholic Church?

The Content of the Faith

Dogma: Essential teachings of the Church and beliefs that are core to the faith, like the existence of God. Dogmas cannot change without changing the faith itself.

Doctrine: Official teachings of the Church which, in theory, can be changed if deemed appropriate by the Church to improve the faith. An example would be allowing Priests to marry. All dogma are doctrines, but not all doctrines are dogma.

Canon Law: Official laws that govern the running of the church. An example would be the Church not accepting “divorce”.

Theology: An attempt to understand and explain the teachings of the Church. An example is what we are involved here in class!

What does it mean to be “Catholic”?

The word “Catholic means

The Catholic faith is deeply

The Catholic faith is profoundly

The Catholic faith is also

The Catholic faith takes _____ seriously, and _____ even more seriously!

The Catholic faith accepts _____ as the successor of _____ and the head of the _____ who are the successors of the _____.

The Chain of Faith: The following can be consider a formula for understanding the logical sequence of saying that Catholicism is the One True Christian faith...

- A. God exists!
- B. We have a relationship with God!
- C. Hundreds of Religions exist, and we must investigate which one possesses the Truth.
- D. Christianity
- E. New Testament: Historical source book.
- F. Jesus Christ said he was God and shared the Gospel.
- G. Jesus Christ proved he was God in the fulfillment of the prophecies (life and crucifixion).
- H. Jesus Christ proved his divinity with his resurrection from the dead.
- I. Jesus Christ founded the Church
 - 1. Church must have unity: Of government, worship and doctrine.
 - 2. Church must be holy: In principles, sacraments, members and miracles.
 - 3. Church must be catholic: In time and place.
 - 4. Church must be apostolic: In doctrine and its succession of rulers
- J. Of all the Christian Churches, only the Catholic Church measures up to the standards.
- K. We then can confidently follow the Catholic Church as the true church of Jesus Christ.

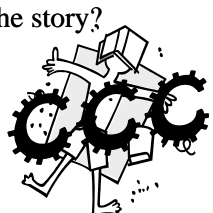
<p>Define...</p> <p>Personal Sin:</p> <p>Sin Omission:</p> <p>Social Sin:</p>

The Beginning... Sin and Salvation!

Compare Creation Stories.

Read Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 and Genesis 2:4-25. What is different?

What are the key or important RELIGIOUS MEANINGS of the story?



Let's Try the Catechism
Look at paragraphs
1849-1885

Sin...

Mortal sin – this is the gravest or most serious of sins because it takes away grace which permits God to live within our soul, makes us an enemy of God, and can keep us from entering heaven. List some possible examples...

Venial sin – this is a lesser sin, It disrupts and hurts our relationships with other people an God... *kinda like hitting your little brother.* List some other examples...

What makes a sin mortal or venial? *There are three conditions for mortal sin: First, the thought, **desire**, word, deed, or mission be a serious violation of the law of God (Ten Commandments) or of the Church. Second, the person must **know** that it is a serious violation. Third, the person must **willfully and deliberately carry out** the grave violation. In other words, the act must be have been premeditated, the person is aware of the seriousness of their action and carry it out in spite of knowing the consequences of the action. All three conditions must be present for a sin to be mortal. If one condition is lacking, the sin is venial.*

Salvation...

- God's saving love changes us!** With God we have a new vision! What changes when we're saved?
- Salvation deals with the whole person!** It doesn't just affect our souls, it also helps mind, emotion and body. Explain.
- Salvation begins in the here and now!** God's love is offered to be used NOW, not just after death! What can we do?
- Salvation is a process!** Our faith is a relationship with God, so it is more than a "once-and-for-all" event. Are you saved?
- Salvation is completed in eternity with God!** The love of God (as seen in Christ's resurrection) is stronger than death!

Lesson Highlights

1. The Bible is the Word of God. It is a collection of books inspired by God, a written record of God's action in the world. It forms, enables, and directs the life of the Christian community.
2. Basically, the 73 books of the Bible are divided into two sections, the Old Testament (46 books) and the New Testament (27 books). The word testament means covenant or agreement. The Catholic Church gathered the books of the bible into one volume and gave the world what it known today as the Bible.
3. The Old Testament records the relationship of God with the Israelite people. It describes God's divine direction of human history and the historical development of the Israelite people's understanding of God. For the most part, the books were written in the Hebrew language between 900 B.C. and 160 B.C.
4. The New Testament is a series of four Gospels or announcements of the Good News of Jesus written by Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke; the letters that Paul wrote to the early Christian communities; other letters addressed to the whole Church; and the Book of Revelation, a message of hope for Christians being persecuted in Rome. Basically, the New Testament is about Jesus, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, whose life, death, and resurrection are described in the New Testament. The books of the New Testament were written in Greek between 50 A.D. and approximately 135 A.D.
5. For centuries many of the stories of the Old Testament were simply told by one generation to the next. This is known as the oral tradition. The New Testament came from a living Church, the apostolic community. Eventually, however, God guided human authors to write what he wanted to communicate. The human authors were not merely passive instruments, however. Using the language and style reflective of their respective cultures, the authors expressed the inspired Word of God that was revealed to them. God did not whisper in their ears and tell them what to write word for word!
6. Inspiration is the divine motivation that the human authors received to write precisely what God intended them to communicate. Using a variety of literary forms, the authors gave a true account of the history of salvation, the account God intended to be given.
7. Everything in the Bible is true. God intended for them to communicate the truth of his plan and purpose for creation, the ultimate meaning of life. God did not intend to impart scientific facts. The authors used the material available to them at their moments in history and the popular literary forms of their time to communicate a message for all times. The inaccuracy of certain scientific data used by them over 3000 years ago to communicate divine truths does not reduce the reliability of those truths.
8. Scripture alone cannot be a sufficient guide and rule of faith. Tradition and Scripture combined formulate the teachings of the Catholic Church. Divine Tradition is the unwritten word of God (See Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, n. 10, page 144 of student text).

Week Four

The Church and the Bible

The individual always brings personal faith and experience to his or her interpretation of the Bible. But one's thoughts and feelings about the meaning of the Bible always need to be evaluated in light of the Church's tradition and teachings. Biblical scholarship has enhanced the Church's understanding of the Bible greatly, especially in the last 50 years. Most bibles provide good introductions to each of the books and helpful footnotes and references. These introductions and footnotes should be carefully noted as one reads the bible, as they are extremely important aides for accurate interpretation of its meaning. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation says: Since God speaks in sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, the interpreter of sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and what God wanted to manifest by means of the words. (#12)

Prayer, Journaling and Sharing

Read Psalm 1, write and share your reflection from the questions below...

How do we communicate with God, and He with us?

The Purpose of Prayer

A _____
C _____
T _____
S _____

The Bible is God's Word...

What is the most difficult thing about scripture?

The Three Stages of Scripture's Development

- **Life:** Experiencing the event.
- **Oral:** Telling of the event.
- **Written:** Recording the event for future knowledge - *Translated from Oral into Greek (200 B.C.E.), then Latin (400 C.E.), then English (1400 C.E.)*

The Three Theories of Inspiration:

- **Divine Dictation** (writing under God's control)
- **Negative Assistance** (writing with God as a "watchdog")
- **Positive Assistance** (writing with God as a team)

The church accepts only one theory, and that is Positive Assistance.

Who Assisted in God in Writing the Bible?

The Writers of the Old Testament were of four schools of thought. They were the

- Yahwists or “J” _____
- Eloist or “E” _____
- Deuteronomic or “D” _____
- Priestly or “P” _____

The Bible Books

The Pentateuch

The final version of the Pentateuch was written in around 500 B.C.E. Moses was NOT the sole writer. The Pentateuch is Greek translation of the Hebrew Torah, otherwise know as the Five Books of Moses.

- Genesis: Means “origin”. Spans creation to Joseph’s death
- Exodus: Means “departure”. Israelite’s flight from Egypt and the Sinai Covenant.
- Leviticus: Instructions given to priest “Levi” for the people.
- Numbers: Derived from the two censuses of Israel at Sinai and a generation later at Moab just before entering the promised land of Canaan.
- Deuteronomy Means “second law” and is a follow up to the first law of Sinai (10 Commandments). They were concerned about people following their covenant with God!

How many books are in the Old Testament? List the...

Historical Books

The Prophetic Books

The Wisdom Literature

How many books are in the New Testament? List the...

Gospels

Epistles

**Book of
Religious History**

**Book of
“Apocalyptic Literature”**

Week Five – Brideg to Eternity...The Communion of Saints!

A. The Mystical Body of Christ: Connection Between Members

We can be strength for one another if one is failing spiritually. And by giving to one another, we strengthen ourselves: Matthew 25....."I assure you as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me". Whatever we do, good or bad, to one of Christ's followers, we are doing to Christ Himself. If one player of a baseball team strikes out, it pulls down his average and hinders the team as well. If a player hits a home run, it boosts not only his average, but helps the whole team as well. We are all one body, there are no strangers, and no such thing as an isolated Christian. Wherever a Catholic may be, he is not alone but joined to millions of Catholics all over the world. All share in the fruits of the Mass, wherever it may be said. Through our prayers and sacrifices, we not only help ourselves, but give a spiritual "blood transfusion" to other members of the Church throughout the world. (CR pg. 217) **ALSO SEE WORD MADE FLESH pg. 285**

B. The Communion of Saints (CR pg. 218)

Bond of Unity: It binds all Catholics on earth through a union of them and the blessed in heaven and the souls in purgatory. CCC, nn. 954-962

Three Groups of the Church

- 1. The Church Militant-** those still on earth, fighting against the world, the flesh and the devil to attain their final goal.
- 2. The Church Triumphant-** those who have fought successfully and now are receiving the reward of their triumph.
- 3. The Church Suffering-** those who are still making up for their sins in the *state of purgatory* and are being purified for heaven. **Notice that purgatory is not a place... it's a process!**
 - a. Indifference:** We as Catholics cannot be indifferent to members in any part of the world.....if one member suffers, we **must help**.
 - b. Joy:** We likewise **must rejoice** when a spiritual rejuvenation occurs in any part of the world.

Therefore, the Communion of Saints is the union of the 3 groups and the mutual spiritual aid that can be given to each other. All members can aid one another by prayers and good works. Those already in heaven have no need of our prayers, but they can help us.

C. Our Friends in Heaven (CR pg. 219)

- 1. Prayer:** We ask our friends and family to pray for us all the time, why not ask our friends who have left this world to pray for us. "Brothers Pray for Us" *1 Thessalonians 5:25*
- 2. Intercession:** Those whom we have helped to get to heaven from purgatory through our prayers, works and penances, will surely intercede for us when they arrive in heaven. Christ himself said in Luke 15:7...."There will likewise be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent". How could that be the case if they have no knowledge of interest in us? If our friends are willing to pray for us while here on earth, when they reach heaven and see our needs more clearly, how much more willing they will be to pray for us then.

D. The Remedy for Sin (CR pg. 219)

Sin impedes our goal of everlasting life therefore Christ gave us the remedy. In John 20:23 "If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them; if you hold them bound, they are held bound." Penance is the way to regain their baptismal grace when one has fallen into grave sin. Stating our sins "with its determining circumstances, in an individual confession" is the way to "recover the grace of justification". (Pope JPII, Reconciliation and Penance, n.33 & CCC, n. 1446.

A Review on Sin...

- 1. Two Forms of Sin:** Assuming you are in relationship with Jesus Christ, when you sin there are two kinds of sin that are offensive to God.
 - **Mortal sin** – this is the gravest or most serious of sins because it takes away grace which permits God to live within our soul, makes us an enemy of God, and can keep us from entering heaven.
 - **Venial sin** – this is a lesser sin.
- 2. What makes a sin mortal or venial?** There are three conditions for mortal sin: First, the thought, desire, word, deed, or mission *be a serious violation of the law of God* (Ten Commandments) or of the Church. Second, the person *must know that it is a serious violation*. Third, the person *must willfully and deliberately carry out the grave violation*. In other words, the act must have been premeditated, the person is aware of the seriousness of their action and carry it out in spite of knowing the consequences of the action. *All three conditions must be present for a sin to be mortal. If one condition is lacking, the sin is venial.*
- 3. A temptation is an invitation to sin.** Temptations themselves are never sinful, no matter how strong they are or how long they last. *Sin occurs only when we give in to the temptation.* The desire for good calls us to a lifelong spiritual struggle!
- 4. Christ restores our friendship with God.** By his Passion, He delivered us from the Satan and from sin. He earned a new life for us in the Holy Spirit. *He is always ready to forgive us and it is his grace that restores what sin had damaged in us.*
- 5. Review the Seven Capital Sins:** pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. *Highlight one or two of the sins and offer examples of the understanding of the sin.*

E. Doing God's Works of Mercy:

“The faithful on earth as members of the Mystical Body can help one another by practicing supernatural charity, by prayers, and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.”

Chief Corporal Works of Mercy

1. To feed the hungry
2. To give drink to the thirsty
3. To clothe the naked
4. To visit the imprisoned
5. To shelter the homeless
6. To visit the sick
7. To bury the dead

Chief Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. To admonish the sinner
2. To instruct the ignorant
3. To counsel the doubtful
4. To comfort the sorrowful
5. To bear wrongs patiently
6. To forgive all injuries
7. To pray for the living and the dead

Why is it important to perform these?

Who benefits from doing these.....us or the person we are doing it for? Why?

Lesson Highlights

1. The key to happiness : “In order to gain happiness – true happiness and not merely a passing pleasure - we must know, love and serve God in this world.”
 - We will not serve someone we do not love.
 - Some people, once you know them, you cannot help liking.
 - Whom we like we will love.
 - And whom we love we will serve.
2. God’s existence
 - What we know about God is that He exists
 - ...and that He is too big for us to comprehend because He is
 - Infinite – without limits & applies to all God’s perfections
 - Eternal- There never was or will be a time when God did not exist
 - Omnipresent- God is present everywhere
 - Immutability- God never changes, our position with reference to him may change but He never does.
 - God’s knowledge- is all knowing...instantaneously and completely
 - God is all powerful- He can do all things by the act of His will
 - God is good & merciful- ie the prodigal son
 - God is all just- He rewards all good & punishes all evil (primarily after death)
 - Trinity
 - Nature v Person
 - Three persons (who)
 - One nature (what)

Week Six

Getting to Know God

The purpose of this chapter is to get acquainted with God by studying his qualities and attributes and by familiarizing ourselves with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Prayer, Journaling and Sharing

Read Exodus 3: 13-14

How did you understand or picture God when you were a little kid? How has that image changed, if at all?

Biblical Images of God (add some detail...)

Old Testament

Yahweh
Savior
Lawgiver
Creator
Judge
Mother

New Testament

Abba
Father
Parabolic Images (God is like...)
Jesus!

The Trinity

The Father

(The Source)

The Son

(The Expression)

The Holy Spirit

(The Love – The Outcome)

Special Questions:

How do we know God truly exists?

Is God a Man?

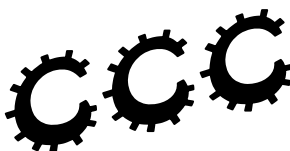
Why does God allow evil to exist?

A Possible Answer...

God is not a being, but being itself.
The Intelligent Designer.
Our conscience points to ultimate goodness.
Our spiritual dimension points to ultimate Spirit.

If God is not a being, but being itself, then “He/She” is neither male nor female. Our images do not dictate who God is, rather God has given us the ability to imagine so as to better understand.

Humans have been given free will, and at times humans abuse this freedom!



Let’s Try the Catechism

Look at paragraphs: 199-231, 261-267

Week Seven

Grace and Virtue

“I come to proclaim good news to you - tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people.” Luke 2:10

“Your hearts will rejoice with a joy no one can take from you.” John 16:22

Outline and Overview

I. *Three Types of Natural Life + one*

- A. *Vegetative life*- found in plants, characterized by growth and nourishment through soil and air.
- B. *Sensitive life*- found in animals, characterized by growth, nourishment & by feeling, seeing, tasting and hearing.
- C. *Intellectual Life*- (or rational life) has all the activities plants and animals have plus the power **to think, to choose, to love.**
- D. *Supernatural Life*- found in persons in the “state of grace”. What we know about this kind of life come not from our own observations, but from that which God has told us about it. It enables us to do things that can help us get to heaven, things we wouldn’t do otherwise. **This “super-life” principle is called Grace.**
Grace is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Christ for our salvation. It is the sharing in the life of God....which is our purpose.... We are meant for heaven by giving us a soul.

II. *Types of Grace*

- A. *Sanctifying Grace*- allows us to do things we could not do ourselves and perform acts which will bring us eternal happiness.
 - 1. Grace is the spiritual health of the soul and comes into the person’s soul at Baptism..... but it may be lost through mortal sin.
 - 2. Lost grace is regained by contrition and the sacrament of Penance.
 - 3. Sanctifying grace may be increased by prayer and especially by the sacraments.
 - 4. Sanctifying grace and mortal sin cannot exist together, we must banish one if we are to have the other.
- B. *Actual Grace*- this is “a special supernatural help from God which enlightens our mind and strengthens our will to do good and to avoid evil”. It is a passing thought that we can act on or not..... **but the push to do good comes from God and that is the actual grace.** It can be a thought, a picture, or just an impulse to avoid what is wrong.....it is how the Holy Spirit influences us.
 - 1. Free Will- we can cooperate or ignore the many graces that come our way every day. We are not forced to accept it. St. Augustine said, “God who created us without our cooperation, will not save us without our cooperation.”
 - 2. Luke 12:48- The greater the graces we receive, the more God will expect of us.....”*From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.*”

III. *Restoration of Sanctifying Grace*

- A. Restoration through Baptism or Penance- with the grace comes other supernatural powers.

1. *Three Theological Virtues*

- a. *Faith*-“...is a virtue leading us to believe firmly anything God has revealed, merely on his word, not necessarily because we understand it.”
- b. *Hope*- “...is that virtue leading us to put all our trust in God, who can do all things and is all-good, knowing that he will do everything to help us toward heaven.”
- c. *Charity*- “...is that virtue leading us to God above all things, just because he is God, and to love our neighbor for the love of God.”

2. *The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* ccc1831-1832

- a. *Wisdom*- helping us to see God as the all-important reality in life
- b. *Understanding*- helping us to distinguish the truths of our religion from error
- c. *Knowledge*- enabling us to grasp the teaching of God
- d. *Counsel*- helping us to see in our life what is God's will
- e. *Fortitude*- helping us to bear or do courageously whatever is necessary to carry out God's will
- f. *Piety*- helping us to honor God more and in the right way
- g. *Fear of the Lord*- leading us to fear giving offense to God as our Father.

3. *The Moral Virtues* ccc 1805-1809; they lead us to good moral lives...

a. 4 Cardinal Virtues

1. *Prudence*- helps us make right judgments on what we should do or not do in the particular circumstances of our everyday life.
2. *Justice*-helps us give everyone what belongs to him and not take what belongs others.
3. *Fortitude*- helps us do the right thing even if it is hard or difficult.
4. *Temperance*- helps us to control our desires and to use all things which please our senses in the right way.

b. Other Virtues

1. *Obedience*
2. *Truthfulness*
3. *Purity*
4. *Patience*
5. and all other virtues regulating the leading of good moral daily lives..... and help us in doing our part to get to heaven.

IV. The Human Heart- A Partnership with God

A. Desire for Joy and Happiness

1. We all desire joy & happiness...that is God's plan for us all
2. We must do our part.
3. God is doing his.... "Through the grace, virtues and gifts of God as gained by Christ and applied to our life by the Catholic Church....."
4. We can do this in part through prayer like the one below:

Please Pray this Prayer Together...

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day, for all the intentions of the Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my associates, for the conversion of sinners, for the relief of the souls in Purgatory, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen

*We must not exist day to day... We have a job to do... it is in our hands to work out our future
We are called to holiness (ccc 2013) "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt.5:48)*

Lesson Highlights

1. Jesus knew he was going to die so he created the Church
2. Jesus recruited members for the Church
3. Jesus promoted the Church by visiting towns, talking to friends and talking in the temple
4. Jesus made it clear to people that this Church was formed to carry on the work that he was doing. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. (John 20:21)
5. Jesus always spoke of his Church – not churches – I will build my church (Matthew 16:18) – and compared it to a sheepfold, a kingdom, a city – words which imply unity of rule (CCC, nn. 754-757)
6. Jesus established certain characteristics of the Church. To decide the one true Church of Christ, we must see first what the characteristics of the Church were when Christ established it.
7. The main feature of the Church is the fact that Christ determined that there was to be one supreme head of it.
8. Jesus chose Peter to head the Church. The supreme headship of Peter was clearly an essential part of Christ's plan. This office would last as long as Christ's Church.
9. The Catholic Church is the only Church today that fulfills this requirement. Through the ages, the successor of Peter has been the Bishop of Rome – the Pope.

“The Church & the Rock”

Jesus founded the Church to carry on his work in the world and he placed the Apostle Peter at the head of this Church.

Discuss...

What qualities do people have that make them leaders?
List the qualities that make a successful organization or group.

Who is the Pope?

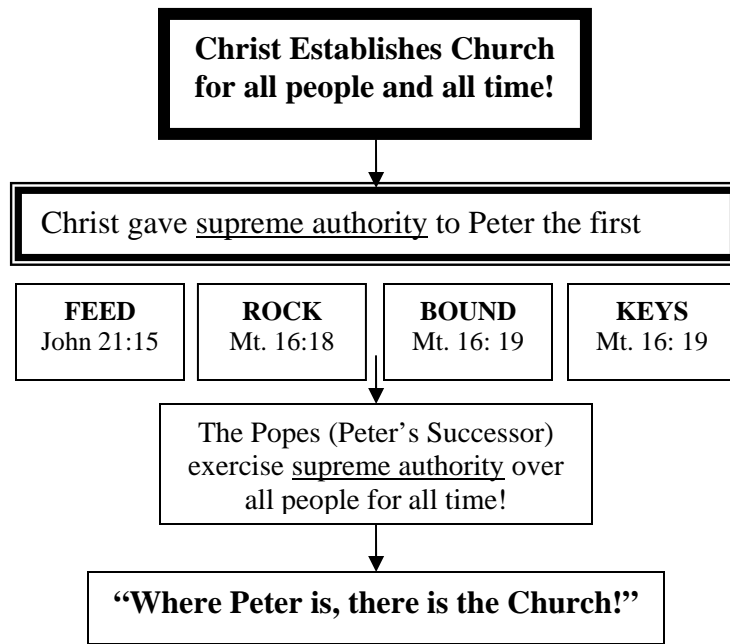
The pope is the Vicar of Christ, successor to Saint Peter, Bishop of Rome, and leader of the Church throughout the world. He is the sign and center of unity in the whole Church.

The Church's teaching on “Why a Pope?”

1. **Peter Chosen to Head the Church-** Christ & his followers were in northern Palestine where the temple of Augustus was located. The temple sat on a majestic rock which towered over the city and was in sight of where the apostles & Christ stood. When Jesus asked “Who do you say that I am?”, it was Simon who answered “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”. At that point Christ declared Simon to be the “rock” on which He would build His church. The name “Peter” means “rock” in Aramaic, which was the language used at the time. The change of a name always indicated a significant event in the Bible which was the case here.
2. **Peter the Key-bearer-** the next line in Matthew 16 gives Peter “the keys of the kingdom of heaven”...which means in our words today that one is given supreme authority over His Church. Even today we symbolically give people the key to a city to honor them. In biblical times if you gave someone keys to your home, you were giving them permission to be in charge and take your place until you returned. In fact Peter is told by Christ that “Whatever you declare bound on earth shall be bound in heaven...?” Although all apostles were given the authority to “bind”, Peter in light of the previous two statements was given authority over the whole church, Christ's Church.
3. **Peter the Shepherd -** Most of the apostles lived in Palestine, most of which was a rural and sheep raising territory as its main occupations. Shepherds gather the sheep at night into enclosures and make sure they are all accounted for; he sleeps with them, feeds them, disciplines them and retrieves them if one runs away. So when Peter and the apostles are at the Sea of Tiberius and He comes to them, singles out Peter and three times asks him the question, “Do you love me?”. All three times Peter answers that he does and so Jesus responds “Feed & Tend My Sheep”. Christ had called his followers His Flock and now He was putting Peter in charge of tending and feeding them. This reference in fact made Peter head of Christ's spiritual flock, to be the Vicar of Christ.
4. **Peter Recognized as Leader-** through out the Acts of the Apostles Peter presides over councils, pronounces judgments in situations of concern. His peers and contemporaries recognized him as the head of the church as well.
5. **Peter's Successor Today.** Obviously Peter and the apostles would die, however the church would live on. Therefore, there must be a means to succession of this position.
6. **The only church that fulfills this requirement set forth by Christ today is the Catholic Church.** The only claim to the succession of Peter's office is the Bishop of Rome, the leader of the Catholic Church. No other church or religion has made that claim. They may claim to be prophets or even God, but no one claims to be the successor to Peter's office except the Pope. Jesus commanded that Peter and his successors govern “until the end of the world” Matt 28:20. ...and that is what the Catholic Church is fulfilling.

Pope Benedict XVI





How is the Pope chosen?

When a pope dies, the College of Cardinals (specially chosen bishops from all over the world) gather in solemn conclave to elect a successor. They vote by secret ballot until two-thirds of the cardinals agree on the new pope. For the past several hundred years, the College of Cardinals has chosen one of their own number as pope.

What is papal infallibility?

Papal infallibility means freedom from doctrinal error. When it is applied to papal teaching, it means that in matters of faith and morals for the whole Church, when the pope is acting formally in the office of shepherd and teacher, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he teaches infallibly, or without doctrinal error. As God's gift to the whole Church, papal infallibility guarantees that in his providence, God will not allow a pope to lead the whole Church into errors contrary to revelation. The pope may define doctrines of faith and morals either on his own authority (ex cathedra) or in assembly with the world's bishops (ecumenical council). Because these teaching modes are unusual, they are together called the "Extraordinary magisterium" of the Church.

Is all papal teaching infallible?

Those teachings that fully and precisely meet the conditions outlined above can be regarded as infallibly defined by the pope himself. The pope always teaches authentically and with authority but only rarely with individual infallibility. The last exercise of this prerogative was in 1950, when Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of Mary's Assumption into heaven.

Do the teachings of the Church change?

The basic teachings of the Church do not change. The Church hands on its tradition consistently and intelligibly. In every age and culture, the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, leads us into a fuller understanding and clearer expression of God's word. The Church might change the specific wording of its teachings to bring about a better understanding in a particular age, but the Church nevertheless hands on the same basic teachings.

Conclude with a reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:43-47

Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And everyday the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Prayer: O God, your Son, Jesus, came to proclaim the kingdom of God. Keep his followers true to his mission of forgiveness and compassion. Keep us united in the Spirit and bound together in peace as we proceed to give witness to gospel values both by what we say and what we do. Amen.

WE ARE CATHOLIC!

- *The Church of Christ must be catholic and universal.*
- *St. Ignatius of Antioch first used the word “Catholic” to describe the Church in A. D. 107.*
- *The Catholic Church is universal in time and place.*
- *The Catholic Church has never ceased to teach the doctrine of Christ on every continent and in every century.*
- *The Catholic Church embraces people of every nation.*
- *One out of every six people in the world is represented in the Catholic Church.*

“The Church Today?”

The Church is the Body of Christ. *The Church is distinguished by four “marks”. The Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These “marks” are inseparably linked and “indicate essential features of the Church and her mission”. (CCC 811) “ ‘The sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic ... subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines’ “ (Lumen Gentium 8) (CCC 870)*

The Characteristics of Christ’s Church: *The Four Marks of the Church*

Unity- the church is one. One in belief, one in worship, one in government. They believe in the “same doctrines, receive the same sacraments and recognize the same spiritual head.”

Review and Read: CR P 101; Matt 23:37, John 10:16, John 11:51-52, John 15:5, John 17:20-21; CCC 866

1. The Church is ONE. It is UNIFIED. This one-ness has many dimensions.
2. The Church is ONE because of her founder, Jesus Christ.
3. No one non-Catholic church can claim the mark of universality. There are some non-Catholic sect in every part of the world, but no single sect is everywhere. Of all the religions existing today only the Catholic Church is universal in time and place.
4. The Church is ONE because of her “soul”, the Holy Spirit who dwells “in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church’s unity.(CCC 813)

Three Groups of the Church

Church Militant- those still on earth, fighting against the world, the flesh and the devil to attain their final goal;

Church Triumphant- those who have fought successfully and now are receiving the reward of their triumph

Church Suffering- those who are still making up for their sins in purgatory and are being purified for heaven.

Indifference: We as Catholics cannot be indifferent to members in any part of the world.....if one member suffers, we must help.

Joy: We likewise must rejoice when a spiritual rejuvenation occurs in any part of the world.

The Communion of Saints is the union of the 3 groups and the mutual spiritual aid that can be given to each other. All members can aid one another by prayers and good works. Those already in heaven have no need of our prayers, but they can help us.

Apostolicity- The origin from Peter and the Apostles and teachings identical with those of Christ’s Apostles.

Review and Read: CR p 119; Matt 16:18, Rev 21:14; CCC 869

1. The universal Church consists of dioceses who are a community under their local bishop ordained in apostolic succession. These particular churches (dioceses) are constituted after the model of the universal Church (CCC 833).
2. “Outside the Church there is no salvation” formulated positively means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is His Body (CCC 846).
3. “The Church is APOSTOLIC because she is founded on the apostle in three ways” (CCC 857): Christ chose the apostles and sent them to proclaim the Gospel. Since the time of the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has continually guide the apostles and their successors. The deposit of faith has been passed on through apostolic succession.

Universality (catholic)- in time, in place.

Review and Read: CR p 115; Matt 24:14, Matt 28:20, Mark 16:15; CCC 868

1. Vatican II states: “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those too may achieve eternal salvation” (Lumen Gentium) [LG 16] document of Vatican II) (CCC 847)
2. The Church was CATHOLIC on the day of Pentecost and will always be so until the day of Parousia (CCC 830)
3. The Church is CATHOLIC because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole human race – calling all to belong to this new People of God (CCC 831).

Holiness- Holiness in its founder, in its principles, in its members (missionaries, saints and martyrs) and in its miracles as a sign of holiness.

Review and Read: CR P 105; Mark 16:17-18; CCC 867.

1. The Church is ONE because of her source. The highest source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God and the Son in the Holy Spirit. Unity is the essence of the Church (CCC 813)
2. The Church of Christ must be apostolic. Any church which is truly Christ's Church must go back to the Apostles for its origin, through an unbroken line and its teaching must be identical with that of the Apostles. The Catholic Church does.
3. If a church cannot point to an unbroken succession from the founders, the apostles, it is a religion but not the true religion. If a church claims to be the one true Church and is teaching something different from what the founders, the apostles, taught, it cannot be the true Church.
4. The Church is HOLY in essence because she came from Christ (the Bride of Christ, CCC 823). The Church is HOLY because its members are capable of holiness.

Doing the Work of the Church!

“The faithful on earth as members of the Mystical Body can help one another by practicing supernatural charity, by prayers, and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.” *CCC 2447*

Chief Corporal Works of Mercy

To feed the hungry
To give drink to the thirsty
To clothe the naked
To visit the imprisoned
To shelter the homeless
To visit the sick
To bury the dead

Chief Spiritual Works of Mercy

To admonish the sinner
To instruct the ignorant
To counsel the doubtful
To comfort the sorrowful
To bear wrongs patiently
To forgive all injuries
To pray for the living and the dead

Three Theological Virtues CCC 1813

Faith is a virtue leading us to believe firmly anything God has revealed, merely on his word, not necessarily because we understand it.”

Hope is that virtue leading us to put all our trust in God, who can do all things and is all-good, knowing that he will do everything to help us toward heaven.”

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The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit CCC 1831-1832

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Fear of the Lord- leading us to fear giving offense to God as our Father.

The Moral Virtues CCC 1805-1809; they lead us to good moral lives...

4 Cardinal Virtues: **Prudence-** helps us make right judgments on what we should do or not do in the particular circumstances of our everyday life. **Justice-** helps us give everyone what belongs to him and not take what belongs others. **Fortitude-** helps us do the right thing even if it is hard or difficult. **Temperance-** helps us to control our desires and to use all things which please our senses in the right way.

Other Virtues: Obedience, Truthfulness, Purity, Patience and all other virtues regulating the leading of good moral daily lives..... and help us in doing our part to get to heaven.

Preparing for Advent: “Jesus Christ – God and Man”

The purpose of this class is to show that Jesus Christ claimed to be God and that he was a stable, competent and trustworthy Person. Jesus is divine and human.

Lesson Highlights:

Who is Jesus of Nazareth?
What do Christians believe about Jesus Christ?
Is Jesus really human?
Is Jesus really divine?
Who is Mary, Our Blessed Mother?

Who Is Jesus of Nazareth?

Read the following “I Am” Sayings of Jesus and identify the person of Jesus Christ, listing His human and divine qualities!

Reading

The Human Jesus

The Divine Jesus

“I am the bread of life.” (John 6:25-35)

“I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12-16)

“I am the gate for the sheep.” (John 10:1-10)

“I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11-18)

“I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:17-27)

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” (John 14:1-14)

“I am the vine.” (John 15:1-11)



**PRAY The Canticle of Brother Sun
by Saint Francis**

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor
And all blessing.

To you alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy
To pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all
that you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to
us through him.

How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his
splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through
Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright
And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, My Lord, through
Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's
moods,
By which you cherish all that you have
made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through
Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through
Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful is he, how gay! Full of
power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through
Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and
produces
Various fruits with colored flowers and
herbs.

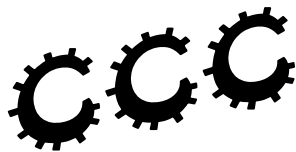
All praise be yours, my Lord, through
those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through
Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those She finds doing your will!
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him
thanks,
And serve him with great humility.



Let's Try the Catechism
Look at paragraphs: 422–483

J.C.: The Summary...

- The Catholic faith is centered on Jesus Christ. **Everything we believe has been revealed** in him or through him.
- The Gospels are the written accounts of Jesus' life that were inspired by the Holy Spirit. **Reading them is an important way for us to personally meet Jesus** and to understand his message and his life.
- God reveals in the Bible what we need to know for our salvation. **Historical, geographical, or even scientific accuracy isn't necessary for our salvation.**
- The Gospels are faith portraits of Jesus, not historical biographies. When they created the Gospels, the authors wrote their stories about Jesus in a way that emphasized the religious truths their communities had learned through the Holy Spirit. **Because of this, we need all four Gospels to understand the whole truth about Jesus.**
- When we consider the titles used for Jesus in the Bible, we are led to an inescapable conclusion: that the authors of the Gospels came to the conclusion that **Jesus Christ was fully God.**
- But he also had a **divine intellect and will.** "He is truly the Son of God who, without ceasing to be God and Lord, became a man and our brother" (Catechism, number 469).
- The mystery of the union of Jesus' divine and human natures in one person is called the **Incarnation.**
- Because in Jesus Christ the human and the divine are perfectly united, **he is the perfect and only mediator between God and humanity.**
- By believing in Jesus and in giving ourselves to him with all **our whole heart, mind, and soul**, the Holy Spirit will help us become more fully the image of God, which is our ultimate destiny.



For Home...

The Teachings of Jesus...

Teachings from Matthew: Read Matthew Chapters 5 – 7 and summarize the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Each of the following events or stories is in only one gospel. Read through at least three of the following and try to identify the **TEACHING** or point that Jesus is trying to make!

John 13: 1-20	Jesus washes the feet of the apostles at the Last Supper.
John 2: 1-12	The wedding feast at Cana and the changing of water into wine.
Luke 9: 25-37	The parable of the Good Samaritan.
John 4: 1-42	Jesus reads the thoughts of the woman at the well.
Matthew 25: 1-13	The parable of the ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom.

The Miracles of Christ

In the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) Jesus' miracles are called **DEEDS**. (*Mt 7:22, 11:20,23, 13:54,58, Mk 6:2b,5, 9:39, Lk 10:13, 19:37*) But John's gospel calls them **SIGNS**. (*2:11, 2:18f, 2:23, 3:2, 4:54, 6:2, 6:14, 6:26, 7:31, 9:16, 11:47, 12:18, 12:37, 20:30*) In John's gospel Jesus' miracles are indications that Jesus is: **the Way**, since in John 5 he restores the power to **LAME**; **the Light**, since in John 9 Jesus restores the power to **BLIND**; and **the Life**, since in John 11 Jesus raises **LAZARUS**.

The Way and the power over nature: Jesus in Matthew 8:23-17, Mark 4:35-41, and Luke 8:22-25 **CALMED THE STORM**. By acting in this way Jesus imitates the God of Psalm 65:8, 89:10, 93:4, and 107:29 who also demonstrated power over the **MOUNTAINS AND THE SEAS**.

The Light and how Jesus leads us: In Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, and John 6:16-21, Jesus **WALKED ON WATER**. By doing this, Jesus imitates Psalm 77:20 and Job 9:8, and the capabilities of **MOSES**.

The Life and His ongoing gift to us: In Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:34-44, Luke 9:12-17, and John 6:1-15, Jesus **FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND**. By doing this he established the truth behind the ongoing healing power of the **EUCCHARIST**.

More Miracles...

A. Mt 8:1-4, Mk 1:40-45, Lk 5:12-14, 17:11-19 **CLEANS THE LEPER**
B. Mt 8:5-13, Lk 7:1-10 **HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT**
C. Mt 8:14-15, Mk 1:29-31, Lk 4:38-39 **HEALS MANY AT PETER'S HOUSE**.
D. Mt 8:28-34, Mk 5:1-20, Lk 8:26-39 **HEALS THE DEMONIACS**.
E. Mt 9:1-7, Mk 2:3-12, Lk 5:17-26 **HEALS THE PARALYTIC**
F. Mt 9:18-19, 23-26; Mk 5:21-24, 35-43; Lk 8:40-42, 49-56 **BRINGS GIRL BACK TO LIFE**.

G. Mt 9:20-22, Mk 5:25-34, Lk 18:35-48 **HEALS THE HEMORRAGING WOMAN**.
H. Mt 9:27-31, 20:29-34, Mk 10:46-52, Lk 18:35-43 **HEALS THE BLIND**.
I. Mt 9:32-34, Lk 11:14-23 **HEALS THE MUTE**.
J. Mt 12:9-14, Mk 3:1-5, Lk 6:6-11 **HEALS ON THE SABBATH!**
K. Mt 15:21-28, Mk 7:24-30 **THE CHALLENGE OF THE CANANITE WOMAN'S FAITH!**
L. Mt 17:14-21, Mk 9:14-29, Lk 9:37-43 **CURES THE BOY FROM DEMONS**.
M. Lk 7:11-17 **RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIN**.
N. Lk 14:1-6 **HEALS THE MAN WITH DROPSY**.

From the CCC on Christ's Teachings...

1725 The Beatitudes take up and fulfill God's promises from Abraham on by ordering them to the Kingdom of heaven. They respond to the **desire for happiness** that God has placed in the human heart.

1726 The Beatitudes teach us **the final end** to which God calls us: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, rest in God.

1727 The beatitude of eternal life is a **gratuitous gift of God**. It is supernatural, as is the grace that leads us there.

1728 The Beatitudes confront us with **decisive choices** concerning earthly goods; they **purify** our hearts in order to **teach us to love** God above all things.

1729 The beatitude of heaven sets the standards for discernment in **the use of earthly goods in keeping with the law of God**.

2153 In the **Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus explained the second commandment: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all. . . . Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."⁸² **Jesus teaches that every oath involves a reference to God and that God's presence and his truth must be honored in all speech.** Discretion in calling upon God is allied with a respectful awareness of his presence, which all our assertions either witness to or mock.

2608 From the **Sermon on the Mount** onwards, Jesus insists on **conversion of heart**: reconciliation with one's brother before presenting an offering on the altar, love of enemies, and prayer for persecutors, prayer to the Father in secret, not heaping up empty phrases, prayerful forgiveness from the depths of the heart, purity of heart, and seeking the Kingdom before all else. **This filial conversion is entirely directed to the Father.**



On Miracles...

156 What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe "because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived".²⁸ So "that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit."²⁹ **Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability "are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all"; they are "motives of credibility" (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is "by no means a blind impulse of the mind".**³⁰

515 The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith¹⁷⁴ and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life. From the swaddling clothes of his birth to the vinegar of his Passion and the shroud of his Resurrection, everything in Jesus' life was a sign of his mystery.¹⁷⁵ **His deeds, miracles and words all revealed that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."**¹⁷⁶ His humanity appeared as "sacrament", that is, the sign and instrument, of his divinity and of the salvation he brings: what was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission

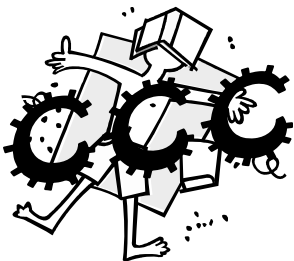
548 The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him.²⁶⁹ To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask.²⁷⁰ So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God.²⁷¹ But his miracles can also be occasions for "offence";²⁷² they are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons.²⁷³

549 By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death,²⁷⁴ **Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below,**²⁷⁵ **but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God's sons and causes all forms of human bondage.**²⁷⁶

550 The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."²⁷⁷ **Jesus' exorcisms free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world".**²⁷⁸ The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood."²⁷⁹

And Finally...

1335 The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Lord says the blessing, breaks and distributes the loaves through his disciples to feed the multitude, prefigure the superabundance of this unique bread of his Eucharist.¹⁵⁸ The sign of water turned into wine at Cana already announces the Hour of Jesus' glorification. It makes manifest the fulfillment of the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the Blood of Christ.¹⁵⁹



ON MARY THE MOTHER OF THE CHURCH....

This portion of our course was designed to be a large group "Q&A" process. The following information has been compiled from Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) to help answer the basic question young people may have about Mary.

Sources: www.catholicapologetics.com and the online CCC www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm

Mary in the Scripture

Luke 1: 26-56 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Mary, Mother of God, Her Assumption and Perpetual Virginity

Luke 1:43 - Elizabeth called her "mother of my Lord" = God

Rev 11:19-12:1 - ark in heaven = woman clothed with sun

Luke 1:34 - how can this be, since I do not know man

Mark 6:3 - "the son of Mary" not "a son of Mary"

Immaculate Conception (of Mary)

Luke 1:28 And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Luke 1:30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

Luke 1:37 for nothing will be impossible for God.

Why is Mary called the "Immaculate Conception"?

The Immaculate Conception

CCC 490 To become the mother of the Savior, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role."¹³² The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace".¹³³ In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace.

491 Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God,¹³⁴ was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.¹³⁵

492 The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son".¹³⁶ The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love".¹³⁷

493 The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God "the All-Holy" (*Panagia*), and celebrate her as "free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature".¹³⁸ By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.

Why is Mary called the "New Eve"?

"Rejoice, you who are full of grace"

CCC 721 Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary.¹⁰¹ Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

In her, the "wonders of God" that the Spirit was to fulfill in Christ and the Church began to be manifested:

722 The Holy Spirit *prepared* Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"¹⁰² should herself be "full of grace." She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty. It was quite correct for the angel Gabriel to greet her as the "Daughter of Zion": "Rejoice."¹⁰³ It is the thanksgiving of the whole People of God, and thus of the Church, which Mary in her canticle¹⁰⁴ lifts up to the Father in the Holy Spirit while carrying within her the eternal Son.

723 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *fulfills* the plan of the Father's loving goodness. Through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God. By the Holy Spirit's power and her faith, her virginity became uniquely fruitful.¹⁰⁵

724 In Mary, the Holy Spirit *manifests* the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible in the humility of his flesh. It is to the poor and the first representatives of the gentiles that she makes him known.¹⁰⁶

725 Finally, through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men, the objects of God's merciful love,¹⁰⁷ *into communion* with Christ. And the humble are always the first to accept him: shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.

726 At the end of this mission of the Spirit, Mary became the Woman, the new Eve ("mother of the living"), the mother of the "whole Christ."¹⁰⁸ As such, she was present with the Twelve, who "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,"¹⁰⁹ at the dawn of the "end time" which the Spirit was to inaugurate on the morning of Pentecost with the manifestation of the Church.

What does Mary's perpetual virginity reflect?

Mary's virginity

CCC 496 From the first formulations of her faith, the Church has confessed that Jesus was conceived solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, affirming also the corporeal aspect of this event: Jesus was conceived "by the Holy Spirit without human seed".¹⁴⁶ The Fathers see in the virginal conception the sign that it truly was the Son of God who came in a humanity like our own. Thus St. Ignatius of Antioch at the beginning of the second century says:

You are firmly convinced about our Lord, who is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin, . . . he was truly nailed to a tree for us in his flesh under Pontius Pilate. . . he truly suffered, as he is also truly risen.¹⁴⁷

497 The Gospel accounts understand the virginal conception of Jesus as a divine work that surpasses all human understanding and possibility:¹⁴⁸ "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit", said the angel to Joseph about Mary his fiancée.¹⁴⁹ The Church sees here the fulfillment of the divine promise given through the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son."¹⁵⁰

498 People are sometimes troubled by the silence of St. Mark's Gospel and the New Testament Epistles about Jesus' virginal conception. Some might wonder if we were merely dealing with legends or theological constructs not claiming to be history. To this we must respond: Faith in the virginal conception of Jesus met with the lively opposition, mockery or incomprehension of non-believers, Jews and pagans alike;¹⁵¹ so it could hardly have been motivated by pagan mythology or by some adaptation to the ideas of the age. The meaning of this event is accessible only to faith, which understands in it the "connection of these mysteries with one another"¹⁵² in the totality of Christ's mysteries, from his Incarnation to his Passover. St. Ignatius of Antioch already bears witness to this connection: "Mary's virginity and giving birth, and even the Lord's death escaped the notice of the prince of this world: these three mysteries worthy of proclamation were accomplished in God's silence."¹⁵³

Mary - "ever-virgin"

CCC 499 The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man.¹⁵⁴ In fact, Christ's birth "did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it."¹⁵⁵ And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as *Aeiparthenos*, the "Ever-virgin".¹⁵⁶

Did Jesus have brothers or sisters?

CCC 500 Against this doctrine the objection is sometimes raised that the Bible mentions brothers and sisters of Jesus.¹⁵⁷ The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, "brothers of Jesus", are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls "the other Mary".¹⁵⁸ They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression.¹⁵⁹

501 Jesus is Mary's only son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed he came to save: "The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, that is, the faithful in whose generation and formation she co-operates with a mother's love."¹⁶⁰

How is Mary the model of our lives?

CCC 273 Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power.¹¹³ The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."¹¹⁴

How is Mary the model of Church?

CCC 963 Since the Virgin Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit has been treated, it is fitting now to consider her place in the mystery of the Church. "The Virgin Mary . . . is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer. . . . She is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ' . . . since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head."⁵⁰² "Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church."⁵⁰³

964 Mary's role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it. "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death",⁵⁰⁴ it is made manifest above all at the hour of his Passion:

Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim, born of her: to be given, by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross, as a mother to his disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold your son."⁵⁰⁵

965 After her Son's Ascension, Mary "aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers."⁵⁰⁶ In her association with the apostles and several women, "we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."⁵⁰⁷

. . . also in her Assumption

966 "Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death."⁵⁰⁸ The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians:

In giving birth you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, will deliver our souls from death.⁵⁰⁹

How did Mary become our mother?

. . . she is our Mother in the order of grace

CCC 967 By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*)⁵¹⁰ of the Church.

968 Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace."⁵¹¹

969 "This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix."⁵¹²

970 "Mary's function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on men . . . flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it, and draws all its power from it."⁵¹³ "No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source."⁵¹⁴

Devotion, the Rosary and Prayers

CCC 971 "*All generations will call me blessed*": "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship."⁵¹⁵ The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. . . . This very special devotion . . . differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration."⁵¹⁶ The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.⁵¹⁷

972 After speaking of the Church, her origin, mission, and destiny, we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to Mary. In her we contemplate what the Church already is in her mystery on her own "pilgrimage of faith," and what she will be in the homeland at the end of her journey. There, "in the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity," "in the communion of all the saints,"⁵¹⁸ the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as Mother of her Lord and as her own mother.